

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph on page 27, lines 1-8 with the following amended paragraph:

The inventors provide herein a putative intracellular sterol carrier protein in *Aedes aegypti*, AeSCP-2 (BQ785056), the first found in insects. The homology of AeSCP-2 to SCP-2 of vertebrates in the conserved sterol transfer domain is 69%. Whether AeSCP-2 has parallel function as its vertebrate SCP-2 family members has not been reported. AeSCP-2 expressed at high levels in the midgut of 4th instars. Ligand-binding assays were performed to assess whether AeSCP-2 ~~interaction~~ interacted with cholesterol specifically. The results suggest that AeSCP-2 has high affinity to cholesterol and functions as a carrier protein in mosquitoes.